

MINUTES

Committee: Amenities Committee
Date: Monday, 9 October 2023
Time: 7:00 pm
Venue: Younghayes Centre, 169 Younghayes Road EX5 7DR

Present

Cllr Kim Bloxham (Chair)
Cllr Les Bayliss
Cllr Kevin Blakey
Cllr Roger Collier
Cllr Lisa Goudie
Cllr Vincent Wilton

Also Present

Cllr Ray Bloxham
Andrew Chapman-New, Cranbrook Town Council
Alexandra Robinson, Cranbrook Town Council

A/23/50 APPOINTMENT VICE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE

Cllr Kim Bloxham proposed that Cllr Roger Collier be elected Vice-Chair of the Amenities Committee for 2023-24. This was seconded by Cllr Les Bayliss and **resolved**.

A/23/51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received on behalf of Cllr Colin Buchan.

A/23/52 DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION

No interests were declared or dispensations granted.

A/23/53 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Les Bayliss seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 as a correct record.

A/23/54 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

A/23/55 AMENITIES MONITORING REPORT

The Chairman advised that the works to the paths at Crannaford Play Park had been completed, and invited members to evaluate their suitability with a view to instructing the Council's Ground Maintenance and Landscaping contractor to proceed with similar works to the paths within St Martin's Play Park.

Following consideration of suitable materials for use in the play parks, it was proposed by Cllr Les Bayliss, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and resolved to recommend to Council that the Council's Ground Maintenance and Landscaping Contractor be instructed to carry out path remediation at St Martin's Play Park for the quoted sum of £8,674.00 and further that officers monitor the paths weekly and seek confirmation that they will be regularly maintained by the Council's contractor.

The Committee noted the amenities monitoring report.

A/23/56 RANGER REPORT

Signed

4 December 2023

The Chairman referred members to the Ranger Report outlining the activities carried out over the summer months and proposals for forthcoming activities. The Ranger invited questions from Members on the proposed activities. Members raised comments in relation to the following points:

Great Meadow – additional E.ON site visit to be arranged.
Education Campus - Ranger activities as part of Campus Week Eco-Week

The Committee thanked the Ranger for his efforts on the updated activity plan and noted the report.

A/23/57 COUNTRY PARK – GREAT MEADOW - FENCING

The Chairman noted the Minute of the last meeting A/23/46 where it was agreed to a further assessment of Great Meadow to determine the most appropriate action in respect of the fencing. The Chairman advised that a site review had taken place and had been attended by some members of the Committee, with officers and a representative from the Council's Ground Maintenance and Landscaping Contractor.

The Committee considered a number of options and noted the Ranger's assessment of the works. Following the discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and resolved to;

1. Remove sections of the stock fence to control footfall and divert pedestrian traffic through multiple routes in Great Meadow Country Park.
2. Delegate to the Ranger in consultation with the Chairman of Amenities Committee, the works to remove the stock fencing whilst retaining the existing posts to be repurposed.
3. For the Ranger to provide updates to the works within the Ranger Report.

A/23/58 COUNTRY PARK – NATURE RESERVE

The Chairman referred to the report on the Nature Reserve and noted the area had received less attention in the last couple of years. The area had become overgrown and did not meet the current standards for a Nature Reserve as determined by the Wildlife Trust. The Chairman invited the Ranger to outline suggestions for remediation of the area.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to delegate to the Ranger in consultation with Cllr Les Bayliss to seek more information about the options for the area as either an extension of the Country Park or as a Nature Reserve together with the associated costs and to report back to the Committee.

A/23/59 COUNTRY PARK – TREE PLANTING

The Chairman advised that the Council had been successful in its application for Grant Funding from the Woodland Trust Grant and the outcome of other grant applications were awaited. The Committee considered the locations for planting the trees awarded within the Grant and additional grant funding.

Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr Les Bayliss, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to

1. Delegate authority to the Ranger to apply for Grant Funding from Branching Out Fund, managed by the Tree Council and
2. Approve planting of trees in locations identified as areas 1 – 6 as set out in the report.

A/23/60 COUNTRY PARK – SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEM (SUDS) MAINTENANCE

The Committee reviewed the maintenance options for the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) Basins known as '1a, 1b and 1c' which have transferred to the Town Council and are now within its responsibility for ongoing maintenance. Members requested clarification on whether drainage ditches and leats would be included in the works and requested that the Ranger obtain further details.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Les Bayliss, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to delegate to the Ranger to confirm the existing contractual arrangements for grass cutting around the Sustainable Urban Drainage System basins and to provide clarification on who will clear the leats and ditches in a further report.

A/23/61 ST MARTIN'S PLAY PARK – REMEDIATION

The Chairman introduced the report on St Martin's Play Park and advised that it had been brought forward to review the financial implications of the recent vandalism, graffiti and damage as a result of anti-social behaviour in the play area.

The Committee noted the financial implications of frequent and repeated damage to equipment amounted to £4,310.25 of which £1,667.77 was as a direct result of vandalism in addition to officer time to carry out and support in the repairs.

The Committee further noted the age of the play park and the assessment on the durability of the remaining equipment and play area surface. Whilst these currently met the RoSPA Play Safety Standards the areas would continue to be monitored. Following discussion, it was:

a) proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to note the financial expenditure with regards to vandalism and increase the annual budget proportionally to cover expenditure relating to anti-social behaviour subject to consideration at the forthcoming Finance and Personnel Committee meeting.

b) proposed by Cllr Vincent Wilton, seconded by Cllr Les Bayliss and **resolved** to defer a decision to install new equipment such as an embankment slide and seek a wider project plan for St Martin's Play Park.

c) proposed by Cllr Les Bayliss, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to note the professional advice of the Council's preferred Play Park Contractor and to continue to monitor the bonded mulch surface in the areas identified using the Council's Monitoring Software and to obtain quotes for the installation of wetpour under the basket swing from preferred suppliers.

A/23/62 NOTICEBOARDS

On 21 August 2023, the full Council noted that its Noticeboard Working Group was planning to produce a report within two months, the contents of which would have been able to inform the Council's budget-setting process (Minute ref. 23/146).

The Chairman invited Councillors Vincent Wilton and Lisa Goudie to provide an update to the committee.

Following the verbal report, it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Les Bayliss and **resolved** to dissolve the working group and delegate to officers to bring back a report to Council.

A/23/63 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Due to the sensitive or confidential nature of the following item it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Vince Wilton and **resolved** to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting on the basis of Section 1 paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 which stipulates that a council may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings

A/23/64 YOUNGHAYES CENTRE – HALL LIGHTING

The Chairman referred to the report on Hall Lighting at the Younghayes Centre and advised that the Council's preferred lighting contractor had been instructed to carry out an inspection in the main hall of the Younghayes Centre, Minute A/23/24. Following which it was assessed that the audible tone was caused by five emergency lighting battery backup units that had failed.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Vincent Wilton and **resolved** to Recommend to Council to approve the works and instruct the Council's preferred contractor Outsource Engineering to carry out the replacement ceiling lights in the community hall using LED Tam-lite Lighting at a cost of £5,124.00 including VAT.

A/23/65 YOUNGHAYES CENTRE – ANNUAL SERVICING OF HEATING HOT WATER AND VENTILATION SYSTEMS

The Item was withdrawn due to insufficient information.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed

4 December 2023